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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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RESEARCH REPORT

Shady Life Pays Off. There's a go-go couple up in Wisconsin whose life is more than a bit on the shady side. And though it's true they're a high-flying pair, they actually are very respectable. They are two robins who set up housekeeping on a perpetually moving "sun follower," a device used by the U.S. Forest Service to test paint samples. The "follower" is motorized and tilts from east to west to expose the paints to maximum sunshine. As it rotates, the framework underneath is always in the shade--a comfortable place, these bright birds figured, for raising a family. And they were right. Twenty-eight days later four healthy fledglings flew from their mobile home--the latest members of the jet set.

Babies Cry for It. Chick peas, sesame flour and soybean flour--served in a bottle? It's being done in Israel and with excellent results. Mixed with sugar and water, these items can be turned into a nutritious formula for infants--high in protein, low in cost. Tried first with rats and chickens--both of which gained noticeably--the mixture is now being fed to 20 infants at the Hasharon Hospital at Petah-Tiquah, Israel. The babies like its taste and suffer no gastro-intestinal disorders from it. How much they'll gain remains to be seen. But the scientists are optimistic because of the formula's high-protein content. Money for this research comes from a PL-480 grant administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The idea, of course, is to find new uses for U.S. foods--and to help the underfed people of the world to have a more nutritious diet.

A Place in the Shade. Some people say it can't be done. But researchers at several State agricultural experiment stations find grass will grow in the shade--if even 25 percent sunlight reaches the ground. Make your own sampling and see. Use a photographic light meter to check the amount of light under your trees and in the sun. Do it at 10 a.m., 12 and 3 p.m. Then compare the averages of sun and shade. If there's less than 25 percent sunlight under the trees, forget about growing grass there. But if you have 25 to 60 percent, plant fine-leaf fescues, bentgrasses or roughstalk bluegrass. With tender loving care--good drainage, water and a little fertilizer--you'll be able to establish a grassy, shady nook that will be the envy of your neighborhood.



MORE FROM RESEARCH

Cancer Control? A Chinese tree, inadvertently introduced into this country in 1933 by a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist, may offer a possible means of arresting one type of lymphoid leukemia. A substance found in the fruit, bark and wood of the tree has proved an active agent against tumors in test animals. Chemists are now trying to synthesize the extract and conduct further tests. Also, more trees have been planted. There were originally only two (in a research plot at Chico, Calif.). Others have now been found growing in central and Southern California, and 1,300 seedlings were planted at Chico this spring. Fortunately for the scientists, the tree grows quickly.

From Feed to Food. Two byproducts of the flour milling process--bran and shorts that have previously been used mainly to feed livestock--can now help supply hungry people with much-needed protein. U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found a way to strip high-protein flour from these milling byproducts. The flour works well in bread, pastas, and soup mixes. In some respects, it's even better than straight-run flour made from the same wheat. The new byproduct flour contains 25 to 40 percent protein compared with 18 percent in regular flour. It also is lower in starch, higher in minerals, vitamins, total sugars, fat, and fiber.

SHOPPING TIPS

Pick the Plentifuls. Now's the time to buy plums. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, produce markets are full of them. Also watch for spot sales of fresh vegetables. Other plentifuls this month are Bartlett pears, potatoes, and peanut butter. In September, there'll still be lots of turkeys, peanuts and peanut products, potatoes, and pears available plus a big crop of Tokay and Thompson seedless grapes.

Look for a Yellow Belly. Thump a watermelon if you will, but also look at its color and shape. Color, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is your best guide to ripeness. If the underside of the melon is light yellowish, it's usually ready for eating. A good melon also is well shaped--with a dull rather than shiny surface.

IN THE KITCHEN

Sweet Talk. Is sugar required in canning fruits? Recently, this is the question most frequently asked U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists. The answer is NO. You don't need sugar to preserve fruit. If there is a diabetic in your family or if for some reason you don't want sugar in your fruit, omit it. Artificial sweeteners can then be added when you serve the fruit.

The Tender Touch. Enzyme solutions applied to meats as tenderizers DO NOT affect human health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. The enzymes work only on the meat to break down tissue. You can be sure the tenderized meat you buy is safe if it's been federally inspected. Only approved tenderizers may be used and the label must indicate that the meat has been so treated.

Boiling Beans. Reluctant to use dry beans because of the time it takes to cook them? There may be help on the way. U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found a formula for storage that reduces the cooking time of dry beans by two-thirds. It involves drying the beans to a low moisture content, putting them in moisture-proof packages, and storing at a low temperature during warm months.

OFF THE PRESS

Trees for Shade and Beauty. Sugar maples don't do well in the fumes and dirt of a city. Norway spruce should never be planted close to a house. Red and silver maples, elms, willows and poplars are notorious sewer cloggers....If you plan to plant a tree, choose it carefully, and care for it well. For how-to-do-it information, write for "Trees for Shade and Beauty," the latest publication in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Home and Garden series. Send 10 cents to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Allow three weeks for delivery.

Consumer's Guide to USDA Services. Revised and up-dated, "A Consumer's Guide to USDA Services" is once again available from the Department of Agriculture. Now in it's second year as one of the Top Ten publications of the Department, the Guide offers rural and city citizens a quick picture of the many ways the Department of Agriculture serves all Americans. There are tips on food, housing, clothing, laundering, insect control, yard and garden care. You name it, it's there--plus a listing of more than 100 consumer bulletins that will provide you with more detailed, specific information. Single copies are available from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Money-Saving Main Dishes. Topsy-turvy tuna pie, chicken timbales, sweet-sour spare-ribs. Sound good? They are--and economical. You get the recipes for these and many other money-saving main dishes in HG-43, a popular pamphlet of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which has just been revised and republished. The 46-page booklet answers the question "What shall we have for dinner?" with buying tips, recipes and menu suggestions. Here's one time when you can save by spending. The booklet costs just a dime--from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Ask for HG-43, "Money-Saving Main Dishes."

How to Use USDA Grades. To shop intelligently for food, you've got to be a butcher, a poultry specialist, a butter and egg man, and a fruit and vegetable inspector--all in one. It takes broad knowledge and experience to properly judge the quality of the foods you buy. But--there's help available. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued a pocketbook-size guide to USDA grades for dairy products, poultry, fruits and vegetables, eggs and meats. The leaflet tells shoppers what markings to look for and how to use USDA grades as a guide. Indexed pages make the booklet easy to handle, easy to use. For a free copy, write to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for "How to Use USDA Grades in Buying Food," PA-708. Be sure to give your name and address, including zip code.

Top Ten. Again this year--for the seventh year in a row--"Family Fare," the U.S. Department of Agriculture's basic recipe book, tops the list of Ten Most Popular Publications of the Department. More than 650,000 copies were distributed. Others on the list, in the order of their preference, are: Removing Stains from Fabrics, Food for Fitness, Family Food Stockpile for Survival, Defense Against Radioactive Fallout on the Farm, Background on U.S. Agriculture, Consumers Quick Credit Guide, Roses for the Home, A Consumer's Guide to USDA Services, and Vegetables in Family Meals.

OBSERVANCE

School Lunch Week. President Lyndon B. Johnson has proclaimed the week beginning October 9 as National School Lunch Week. It commemorates 20 years of providing good, nutritious meals to school youngsters. This year some 19 million children in over 71,000 schools will participate.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Burial for Beauty. There were bodies everywhere--so many that a bulldozer was required to dig the hole. And though there originally was no money for the burial, many local clubs offered cash to help. Everyone was eager to have the eye-sore along the busy intersection in Yell County, Arkansas, cleaned up. The property had been filled with discarded cars for many years--at the very spot where tourists turn into a vacation area around the Blue Mountain Dam. It took the Waveland Extension Homemakers club to get the project started. Other community clubs cooperated; so did the property owner. Hundreds of cars that formerly cluttered the roadside were crushed and buried--to make the passing scene more enjoyable. It's a project you and your club might want to sponsor in your community.

Farm-City Week. It's not too soon to plan your club's program for Farm-City Week, which this year will run November 18 through 24. Teas and luncheons serve as good ice-breakers when city and farm women get together. Later, farm groups can invite city clubs to go with them to visit a dairy, a hatchery, or a general-type farm. City women can, in turn, take their rural neighbors on tour of the town's industrial plant, or local TV station. Church groups may want to plan a Harvest Home Sunday as a kick-off to Farm-City Week. For program help, write to the Chairman, Women's Activities, National Farm-City Committee Inc., 101 East Erie Street, Chicago, Ill. 60611. Or locally, contact your county Extension home economist or county agent.

GARDENING TIPS

For Flowers That Bloom in the Spring. Late summer or early autumn is the best time to plant iris. Now, too, is the time to divide and transplant any crowded iris you may have in your garden. U.S. Department of Agriculture horticulturists suggest you first cut leaves to one-third their full height. Dig under a clump of rhizomes and lift out the whole clump at once. Wash away the soil and divide the roots with a sharp knife. Each division must have at least one growing fan of leaves, a few inches of healthy rhizome, and a number of well-developed roots. Plant in full sunshine.

Nipped in the Bud. An insecticide solvent is being used experimentally to remove the side buds on chrysanthemum plants. U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists find that if the solvent--a naphthalene-base oil--is applied in just the right amount at just the right time the terminal flower is not affected yet the lateral buds abort. This produces the big football mums that currently are developed only by nipping buds by hand. Although the chemical looks promising in tests, more research is needed. It doesn't work well with all varieties.

Thornless Blackberries. If you live in the east-central United States and have a little extra room in your yard, you might want to try two new varieties of thornless blackberries. Trial plantings will be available this fall for the first time. Ask for the Smoothstem or Thornfree. Both are products of U.S. Department of Agriculture research. Both, too, are productive and moderately winter-hardy. Although canes are trailing the year after planting, they are thereafter semi-upright.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.